

Bernalillo County Healthcare Task Force
Community Meeting Comments • June 30, 2014
Los Vecinos Community Center, Tijeras

The following comments are from notes that were written on flip charts during the meetings in June 2014. These notes are intended to accompany the audio recording of each meeting. At each meeting, following a brief presentation on the Healthcare Task Force's purpose, participants were invited to offer how to improve healthcare in Bernalillo County, particularly how to improve the healthcare safety net. Ideas include both areas of concern (that the Task Force should focus on) and recommendations. All comments are presented in chronological, rather than thematic, order. Each primary bullet represents a different speaker; indented bullets are part of that person's comments.

June 30, 2014 Community Meeting Comments • Los Vecinos Community Center

What percentage of population are non-residents of BC served by UNMH? Are they financially assessed? Does UNMH track this?

- 70% BC residents/30% non-residents
- UNMH tracks residency and bills patients. Non-residents may apply to their county for assistance with the bill

Do some counties (e.g., Sandoval) pay for healthcare differently than Bernalillo County?

- State law establishes various maximum mil levy rates for counties (eg., 4.25 mils in Sandoval County; 6.5 mils in Bernalillo County). In addition, other counties can assess a sales tax to pay for healthcare.

Does UNMH help facilitate claims by the patient in his county?

- The mil levy assessment doesn't go to UNMH; it goes into an indigent claims pool in the particular county.
- UNMH checks if the patient has insurance or Medicaid.
- If the patient is eligible for Medicaid, UNMH provides assistance for the patient to apply for it.
- If the patient is not eligible, then UNMH bills for the patient for services.

Who provides services in the jail for people with mental health?

- Inside the jail there is a contractor to provide care; BC pays for those medical services.
- If an inmate needs hospital care, the patient goes to UNMH, and BC pays.

What is UNMH's assessment of mental health needs in the community?

Examples provided by UNMH:

- An estimated 119 beds are needed in Bernalillo County; that is about the number available.
- The available services not always what people need, e.g., case management.
- Sometimes people sent out of state for residential services.
- There are unaddressed addiction problems among people discharged from jail, which leads to crime/trespassing. One of the root causes is the need for housing, which helps to prevent re-incarceration and re-hospitalization.
- ACA requires mental health coverage.

Recommendation: Identify funding streams to support mental health; use it to expand access to mental health services outside of MDC.

- If a person goes to prison, it is 2 years before he receives treatment outside the law enforcement system

What is the percentage of the population with mental health needs?

- Fifteen to 20% of the jail population has a serious mental illness compared to 5% in the general population.

Is UNM looking at using clinics to keep people out of the hospital?

- UNMH has 6 clinics in the community and has acquired 2 properties to build 2 more. Behavioral Health services will be available in the new clinics.
- UNMH works with federally qualified health centers (such as First Nations and Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless); people can access those clinics and be in the UNM system.

What parts of the County make the greatest use of the emergency room? Do you know where the high-use areas are, and are you going there to provide services?

- UNMH gives patients handouts with information on alternatives to access the system.
- There is a caseworker that sets patients up with primary care.
- UNMH has an urgent care center for non-emergencies.
- UNMH has reciprocity with the Sandoval County Medical Center.

Recommendation: UNMH should provide care to all county residents of the County, even those who have no insurance coverage and are unable to pay for services.

Recommendation: More of the mil levy funding should go to Pathways program.

In response to a question to the County Commissioner: The County has no say over the budget for the mil levy funding; the state statute requires funding must go to a hospital. However, BC should be involved in the budget process in an advise and consent role, which the statute allows.

What percentage of the UNMH budget is from the mil levy?

- 12%. \$90 million out of a \$840M budget.

What is the level of emergency room funds that is not reimbursed?

- The unreimbursed cost of ER care is \$46M annually.
- The share of that assumed by BC is \$110M.
- In the last legislative session there was a bill to allow taxation of all NM counties to fund a 1st class trauma center. The taxpayers are supporting a high degree of emergency room and trauma care at UNMH.
 - *UNM response:* 20% of ER/trauma care is from outside Bernalillo County—and it is profitable.

What kind of funding can be used to expand intervention and the number of beds for behavioral health?

- \$50 million of UNMH budget goes to behavioral health.
- UNMH is working on proposals to improve the psychiatric centers.
- There are few services for people coming out of MDC. Recommendation: Increase the continuity of care after discharge from MDC.
- People need a safety net, so they don't delay care. Recommendation: Do not send unpaid bills by uninsured patients to collections.
- There are more than 4,000 homeless students in the APS system. How many homeless are signed up for ACA?
-